

To John Bruce

1913644

My dear Sir

I have this day forwarded for you to Mr Stewart the first volume of the work which has been, necessarily, so long in my hands.

That you will like it I anticipate from the kindness you have invariably shown to any performances of mine. I know its defects as well as, perhaps, better than, any man, but if I hadn't kept it by me since or

nineteen, years I could not have avoided some of them.

My hope is to find a few judges with half your knowledge and a tithe of your charity.

The only really painful incident in connection with the book is the estrangement it has produced between Dyce and myself; and I assure you, with as much solemnity as I ever said anything in my life, that if I had known how he would have taken in judgment what he seems to consider an interference with his exclusive province, I would not have undertaken the work. It is not, surely what I have seen, that I value his friendship so lightly, but that I value my own

peace of mind, and you were so disappointed when I had a thousand claims to sympathy and assistance.

My main object in writing now is to ask you a question. I have printed 25 copies of a very rare (indeed unique) English poem: the printing & paper cost £10 and the binding of each copy 1*l*. Then each copy is worth exactly 9*s*. I am not rich enough to give them away, but I am rich enough to give away any trouble I take with them. Would you like to have a copy?

Observe - I speak plainly - the obligation really is to have the opportunity of obtaining a copy, as I have so many claimants, but I

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would not close my list without asking you if you wish to belong to my new Black Letter Society, for the tracts (whether in prose or verse) will be printed in B. L.

You may have a thousand and good reasons to the contrary not one of which you need apply to me; only I have always received so much considerate kindness at your hands that I feel doubly bound to make any trifling return I can.

Yours always most sincerely
J. Payne Collier

Victoria Road
Kensington

Feb. 15. 1844.